CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM) (SHRI VENOD SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Financial assistance received by Surper Bazar from the Central Government during the last three years as under:

(Rs. in lakhs)

Year	Share Capital	Loan	Sub-sidy	Total
1992-93	12.80	16.00	8.00	36.80
1993-94	8.00	8.00	4.00	20.00
1994-95	8.00	8.00	4.00	20.00

(c) and (d) It has been reported by the Super Bazar that the funds for the year 1992-93 have been fully utilised and utilisation certificates have been submitted. While most of the funds for 1993-94 and 1994-95 have been reportedly utilised, utilisation certificates have not been furnished pending their full utilisation.

Steps to Expand Indo-US Trade Ties

692. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to increase and improve the Indo-US trade ties;

(b) if so, the steps taken in that direction during the last three years;

(c) the efforts proposed to be made in the Eighth and Ninth plans to expand trade relations between both the countries; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) In order to improve Indo-US trade ties there have been increased bilateral interactions both in Government and private sector. These include the visit by the Indian Prime Minister to USA in May 1994, US Commerce Secretary's visit to India in January 1995, Indian Commerce Minister's visit to USA in June 1995, the Meeting of Indo-US Economic and Commercial Sub Commission in April 1995 in Delhi, the Meeting of the Indo-US Joint Business Council in October, 1994 in Washington. In January 1995, Indo-US Commercial Alliance was launched which provides a framework for increased interactions between, the private enterprises in both the countries for expanding trade and commercial ties.

(c) and (d) During the Eighth Plan, trade policy reforms are being carried out to integrate Indian economy with the rest of the world. These reforms are likely to lead to further expansion of trade relations between the two countries. The Ninth Plan has not yet been finalised.

Safety standards in coal mines

693. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA:
SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) what are the safety standards in coal mines;

(b) whether it is a fact that serious and fatal accidents often take place in the coal mines due to poor safety standards; and

(c) if so, what do Government plan to improve the situation and details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) Coal mining, particularly underground mining by its very nature is a hazardous occupation. As such, despite taking precautions, the possibility of occurrence of serious and fatal accidents can not be ruled out. However, to combat the hazards, the mining operations are conducted as per the safety standards laid down in the Mines Act, 1952, the Coal Mines Regulations, 1957 and Rules, Orders and Bye-laws made thereunder.